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/Information on the use of beads as an integral part of a woven fabric will be found in category 286./

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Fig. 31 – Kamarakoto Female Europeanized Costume.
Both women are wearing typical, bright red dresses made by themselves (the woman on the right is kneeling). The woman on the left is sewing a seam in characteristic fashion, holding the cloth with the toes and sewing toward the body.

5:Simpson N-5 (1939) 1940 SS16 Pemon SS16
Kamarakoto

291 but they prefer ordinary manufactured long trousers. To this may be added a
177 shirt, a pair of alpargatas, and perhaps a hat — few men have this much.[129]
[122] Aside from alpargatas, which a few of them have acquired, the only European clothes used by women are dresses, which they make themselves from cotton trade goods, preferably bright red.[130]

294 These dresses are made from a straight piece of goods, folded double, sewn along the selvage.[131] About six inches are left unsewn next to the fold, for armholes, and a hole is cut for the neck in the middle of the fold. They are neatly hemmed and the neck is often finished with a band, usually of
[177] another color. Steel needles and store thread are used. All sewing is done with double thread and they begin with a very long strand with the result that it knots frequently and they spend considerable time patiently unknotting it. The cloth is usually held by one foot, between the first and second toes, stretching the cloth out in a straight line from body to foot and sewing toward the body (Fig. 31). Stitches are large and irregular in length. Side seams are sewn with a half-back stitch. Only one variant was seen, with the two pieces whipped together as in overcasting. Hems are sewn either half-back or with a single running stitch, usually the latter.

Strips of cloth used to bind the neck edges are about one inch wide, straight, sewn on with running stitch, turned and caught down with a hemming stitch. Necklines may be of various sorts, boat-shaped, round, round with a
[153] slit down the front, etc. For nursing mothers they must be large enough to permit the child to get at the breast, although occasionally the armhole is left extra large and the breast reached through it. If the goods happens to be extra wide, crude, irregular pleats may be taken around the neck. Dresses usually reach to just below the knees.

291 These dresses are thus somewhat different, both in methods of making
177 and in pattern, from those current in Venezuela and they represent the interesting phenomenon, so well illustrated by North American tribes in historic times, of the development of new native cultural traits on the basis of introduced materials.

Native Costume.

The dresses thus described are native costume fully within the meaning of the words, but under this heading I shall describe the older costume, still extant and only now in process of being partly supplemented and partly replaced by costumes European in basic model.

291 The man's costume consists solely of a belt, loincloth, and sometimes sandals. The belt, tien-aka:mūi (a word also applied to European belts), generally consists simply of a white cotton string tied around the waist. Sometimes, for special occasions, a more elaborate belt of twisted strands of beads is used

129-131 [see footnotes on p. 322, category 11b - Analyst]

294 [129] [28] The nearly flat sole is cut from the thick, fibrous, and nearly inflexible leaf base of a moriche palm. On the upper (foot) side, the anterior end is peeled, while the heel part is left with the smooth surface of the cortex. Cords of moriche fiber are used, several cords running together from holes on each side at the front of the heel part (at the instep) and these run behind and above the heel when the sandal is worn. A double cord is attached through three holes (in longitudinal series) at the front part of the sandal so as to run between the first (big) and second toes, then separating and tying to the heel cords above their attachments on each side. Essentially similar sandals are worn by almost all the sabana Indians of this whole area, even into northern Brazil. They are another indication, if any is needed, that the Kamarakotos are decidedly sabana Indians, for sandals are rarely or never used by the forest tribes and are, for instance, unknown in the mainly forested Amazon valley, proper. Even the sabana Indians, including the Kamarakotos, seldom wear them, however, doing so only on relatively long marches in the dry season and taking them off around their homes or on soft or slippery terrane. These sandals are called purai while the recently introduced Venezuelan sandals are called by their Spanish name, "alpargata."

291 171 182 [48] [177] [192]

291 [28] [177] The primitive female costume consists only of an apron just large enough to cover the pubic region and with attached strings by which it is tied around the waist. This apron, the mosa or motsa, is now always a woven fabric with beads. Like the dress it is an adaptation of a foreign material to native use, but it is a far older one and merely uses the material in a purely native pattern. These aprons are very attractive and are made in a great variety of patterns — indeed I have never seen two exactly alike. The favorite colors are white and dark blue and usually the main part of the apron will be solidly one of these, with geometrical borders of the other above and below. There may rarely be an allover pattern or a median band, and colors other than blue or white are sometimes used, but in all that I have seen blue or white predominates,[133] Some of the women always wear the mosa, even though a dress be worn over it. The dress has thus supplemented and not supplanted the older costume and this is an interesting and quite literal example of cultural stratification. [53]

174 114 291 [177] It is commonly believed that all the Carib tribes, which would include the Kamarakotos, went without any clothing, even loincloths and aprons, in pre-Columbian days and that the practice of covering the pubic region arose under European influence. Koch-Grünberg, for instance, states this very positively as regards the loincloth and notes as a decisive argument that even the (Taurepán, not Arekuna in general) name kamisa, is foreign. De Goeje is equally positive as regards the Dutch and French Guiana Caribs and cites Barrere as saying in 1743 that they were completely naked. Roth quotes numerous authorities to this effect regarding British Guiana Indians and apparently inclines to agree with the consensus although he does not give a specific statement of his own

133 [see footnote on p. 322, category 116 - Analyst]

291 127. Even if we agree, as I do not, that the Caribs wore no clothing
177 whatever before contact with Europeans. Alejo's date is too late by a century
[114] or two and it is virtually impossible that any authentic tribal memory is as old as that.

[123] 128. The women would never visit us except in dresses — I shall show
[562] on a later page that this was because of pride, fashion and authority, and not because of personal modesty or fear. They either stayed at home in the remoter places that we did not visit, or borrowed dresses for the occasion. The men wore trousers if they could, but had no hesitation in visiting us without them.

129. But by the time we left, the cacique was more conventionally clothed than we were and would have excited no comment on any city street. No other Indian achieved quite this degree of sartorial splendor.

130. Our party did supply them with some ready-made dresses, but this is a momentary phase. The women of the tribe as a whole are adopting and will soon universally wear the homemade costume described.

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114 131. This and the following paragraph are by my wife, Dr. Anne Roe.

171 132. In fact many culture traits common to these Indians and the civilized part of Venezuela are not evidence of Venezuelan influence on the Indians but of the reverse.

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126 133. except one Taurepán mosa that was not made for use but as a curio
128 for a missionary, who supplied the heads. Very misleading data are sometimes given by such made-to-order specimens and I may emphasize here that I have described nothing that was not seen actually in use by the Indians and collected nothing but used objects or, when this was impossible, new ones made for use and carefully compared with those that had been used. In the field of their special skills, notably basketry, the Indians can and will supply almost anything that a collector wants, but if he describes what he wishes and has it made to order, the result is likely to be definitely non-Indian in form and design.

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301 134. If I understand Roth correctly (this passage is not entirely clear to
304 me), he considers the belief that these bands permanently groove the limbs "ridiculous" and "physiologically impossible" "delusions." Nevertheless it is a fact, fully proven by the plainly visible effects of the bands even when the bands themselves have been removed.